

WASHINGTON, DC—Today, a majority in the House of Representatives voted to pass a bi-partisan agreement to extend President Obama's middle class tax cuts for 160 million working Americans, to ensure that Americans who lost their jobs through no fault of their own receive their unemployment insurance benefits, and to guarantee our seniors on Medicare have access to the doctors of their choice and the care they need. Before voting for the legislation, Representative Xavier Becerra (CA-31), Vice Chair of the House Democratic Caucus and Ranking Member of the Social Security Subcommittee, [delivered the following remarks on the floor of the House](#) :

“In December this Congress gave 20 conferees three tasks to achieve by February 29th: □ to extend the payroll tax cut for 160 million middle class Americans, to ensure that Americans who lost their jobs through no fault of their own receive their unemployment insurance benefits, and to guarantee our seniors on Medicare have access to the doctors of their choice and the care they need. We achieved this goal.□

“But let's be clear. This agreement is by no means free of controversy. The gentleman from Maryland, Mr. Hoyer, eloquently illustrated that. Our Republican colleagues succeeded in extracting a pound of flesh from middle class working Americans who also serve ably in our federal government.□

“But what was the alternative that we faced? A House Republican bill passed in December that quadrupled the cuts to workers in their salaries and benefits; that increased the cost of Medicare for millions of seniors; that eliminated and restricted access to physical, speech, and occupational therapy in hospital settings for Medicare patients; that eliminated the child tax credit for millions of modest income families; that eliminated unemployment insurance benefits for nearly three million Americans who

have lost their jobs through no fault of their own.□

“This agreement represents a rejection of the approach in the House Republican bill of December. It is a compromise, free of the controversial and extraneous measures in that Republican bill in December. But it is a bill of controversy. Because we are asking American workers who work very hard, who give their all and just happen to work for the federal government to pay the cost of helping other Americans who are unemployed.□

“We could have made this a good bill. We could have asked every American, especially those most able to contribute, to help out. We didn't in this bill and that's why it's a compromise. It could have been much better. But we faced the deadline by February 29 for 160 million American families would have seen their taxes increase. We would have seen a situation where millions of Americans would have lost their unemployment insurance. We needed to act and we did.□

“I urge my colleagues to vote for this compromise measure.”